



November 9, 2016, Meeting Minutes
Radisson Gateway, 18118 International Blvd, Seattle

The meeting of the Washington Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials was brought to order by Executive Director, Teri Wright, at 2:57 p.m.

Commission Members Present:

Melissa O'Neill Albert

Greg Dallaire

Michael Donabedian

Dorothy Gerard

Liz Heath

Steve Isaac

Wayne Jiang – Phoned in at 3:08 p.m.

Sarah Mahoskey

Raymond Miller

Patrick Pavey

Linda Peterson

Don Robinson

LeAnna Chauvin

Steven Starkovich

Larry Turner

Dick Walter

Staff Present:

Teri Wright, Executive Director

Lindsay Matthews, Executive Assistant

Teri Wright opened the meeting by asking for an update from the budget team: Dick Walter, Chair, Liz Heath, Vice Chair, and Greg Dallaire. The team was put together in May 2015 to assist the Commission with working on its budget.

Dick started by saying that in the 2008-2009 biennium the Commission budget was \$381,000, but in the 2014-2015 biennium it dropped to \$308,000, which is almost a 20% decrease. The Commission cannot take cuts like a large state agency that has a bigger budget and may have many areas from which to cut. He gave everyone a copy of the Op-Ed that was published in The News Tribune on May 20, 2016, which gives an overview of the Commission's predicament.

They had meetings with:

- Lt. Governor Owen
- Shane Hamlin, Office of Financial Management
- David Schumacher, Office of Financial Management
- Representative JT Wilcox
- Representative Andrew Barkis
- Senator Randi Becker
- Senator Jeannie Darnielle

They requested meetings with:

- Senator Andy Hill
- Representative Frank Chopp
- Representative Hans Dunshee

These meetings were not granted.

Dick also talked about how he and Teri made a presentation to the House of Representatives who actually approved the Commission to get an increased budget, but the Senate did not approve the budget. The op-ed letter was written by himself, Liz Heath, Greg Dallaire, and Teri Wright to help get some information out to the public about the Citizens' Commission.

Liz Heath talked about the background of the budget with staff having to take cuts and how close the Commission is to not being able to do its job. When she and Teri met with Senator Jeannie Darnielle the senator suggested the Commission become part of another state agency to assist with overhead, which Liz believes is not legally possible. She mentioned that we exist because of the Constitution and that needs to be recognized so the Commission can function as it should.

Greg Dallaire talked about the Commissions' future, how the Commission staff is keeping records at staff's home offices and that could be bad if any number of things were to happen. Relying on staff to keep records is critical. He mentioned the Commission budget cuts make it so the Commission is unable to go around the state for meetings like in the past. Having all the Commission meetings in SeaTac is necessary this year due to the budget, and he believes, is in contradiction to the Commission's mission. The Commission is getting a legal opinion about the potential of getting the same budget, and if so the Commission can't hold all the meetings. The Commission may need to write to the legislature and elected officials to let them know that the Commission may become inoperable.

Liz Heath said if we were audited by the State there would be possible findings because of the current operation.

Teri said the current budget request has been sent to the governor's office for an \$88,000 increase for the next biennium.

Dick Walter said the Commission is so small that it falls through the cracks unless someone is in the Legislature to speak for the Commission. The Commission almost has a letter ready to send out to the elected officials, the Commission is waiting until the various elected officials are in office. Then the Commission will have to decide to finalize this letter and send it. Would there be fall out for sending the letter? When the elected officials receive the letter we hope they will say, "If you are in trouble, we are also in trouble."

Greg Dallaire said the budget team will consult with the Commissioners before sending the letter out, but wanted to give the Commission a heads up to understand how serious this is for the Commission's future. One major difference between the Commission and most other agencies in government is they have their own lobbyist within their agency, they have a team of people that are familiar with the legislators. We are a Citizens' Commission that doesn't meet on a regular basis, the Commission meets every other year, and doesn't have a presence in Olympia. The Commission needs to figure out a way to call attention to the importance of the mission.

Liz Heath added that the Commission is trying to find a pro-bono lobbyist. Liz volunteered to find one.

Raymond Miller said the Commission needs to get the budget request in and talk to the budget chairs in the House and the Senate.

Dorothy Gerard asked Teri if the Commission's increase has been included in the Governor's budget. Teri said she doesn't know because the Governor's budget has not yet been released. She also said if the Commissioners want to contact their legislators, she is willing to send out the formatted letter, but wants the Commissioners to know it is up to them if they want to send out the letter. The Commissioners can look up who their legislators are and send them a letter about the Commission's dire predicament.

This concluded the budget discussion.

Dick Walter said that he has been on the Commission for 6 years, he has seen a lot during that time. Additionally, he has been impressed with how well the Commissioners treat each other when discussions get heated. He thanked Teri for her help and everyone's help over the years, but stated that he will decline to continue as Chair.

Teri shared the process for elections of Chair and Vice-Chair and the terms.

- ✓ There are no self-nominations.
- ✓ In the case there is one or more nominations, a vote must still take place for each role, votes will be cast by voice or a show of hands.
- ✓ The members of the Commission shall elect a chair and vice-chair from among their membership. There is no set term of office for the chair or the vice-chair.
- ✓ Upon election, the chair and vice-chair will immediately assume their duties.

- ✓ The chair and vice-chair may be replaced by majority vote of the Commission members' at any time.

Teri asked Commissioners to consider nominating one person that will on the Commission after 2018. This will assist with the Commission's continued operation.

Teri asked for nominations for Chair. Dick Walter nominated Dorothy Gerard, Wayne Jiang seconded. There was a voice vote and Dorothy won with an affirmative unanimous voice vote.

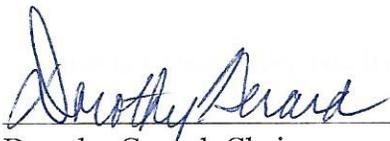
Dorothy thanked Commissioners for being elected Chair.

Teri asked for nominations for Vice-Chair. Patrick Pavey nominated Greg Dallaire and was seconded by Liz Heath. There was a voice vote and Greg Dallaire won with an affirmative unanimous voice vote.

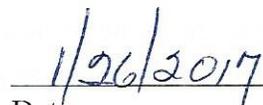
Teri went over the 2016-2017 meeting schedule and said that the January meeting will be held in Olympia at the Department of Enterprise Services. The remainder of the meetings will be held in SeaTac at the Radisson. The January meeting parking may be an issue. We will send out a letter with where to park and will be sending out parking passes. She asked Commissioners to please let Lindsay know if they have a handicap placard, because that will change the parking situation for those Commissioners. She explained the handicap parking situation. Meals, the Commission is doing a little differently as well. She summarized the plan for lunches and parking each day. She also talked about other parking possibilities.

Teri asked if there was any other business that needed to be discussed prior to adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned by a motion by Raymond Miller and seconded by Patrick Pavey. The motion was carried by a unanimous voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 3:36 p.m.



Dorothy Gerard, Chair



Date